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OPAQUE AND TRANSLUCENT ENAMEL.

III.



ITALIAN ENAMEL OF ABOUT THE YEAR 1500.

IN THE TRIVULZIO COLLECTION.

IN the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the arts of design were making rapid progress, so imperfect a process as the first attempts in enamel painting could not long be sustained in practice. Accordingly, about this period we find a great change in the processes employed by enamel painters. Before beginning their painting they covered the plate of copper with a thickish layer of enamel, either black or of a deep color. Upon the ground thus prepared they executed the drawing, by means of different processes, with white opaque enamel in such a manner as to produce a grisaille,* of which the shadows were obtained either by laying on this white enamel less thickly in some parts than in others, or by scraping it away to let the background reappear; which latter operation was to be performed before the firing of the piece. A few heightenings of white and gold were added to increase the effect. The carnations continued, as before, to be lightly laid on in relief, but were almost always expressed by a flesh-colored enamel.

If the piece, instead of remaining in grisaille, was to be colored, the different colors of a semi-transparent enamel were spread over the grisaille. In the colored enamels of this class the sky and some portions of the ground were often represented by thick layers of color. The piece was of course placed several times in the furnace during these operations, which could only be done in succession. Thus, by adding an enamel ground to the plate of copper, before beginning the painting, the colors were rendered capable of being worked with freedom and at different times, and became susceptible of every kind of combination and of every gradation of tint resulting from this fusion. The drawing and painting were also rendered more perfect from the facility of retouching. The Limousin enamellers possessed a great many other processes and resources. One of these in particular they frequently made use of. In different parts of the draperies and accessories, a leaf of gold or silver, called "paillon" or "clinquant," was fixed upon the enamel ground; upon this thin leaf of metal the shadows were painted; it was then covered with a colored translucent enamel; the lustre of the metal gave a brilliant effect, which the artist knew how to turn to advantage.

Excepting that of the copper plaque, signed "K. I. P.," in the Beurdeley collection, the illustrations of painted enamels on this page are Italian, of the latter part of the fifteenth century or the beginning of the sixteenth. Leonard and Jehan Pénicaud, who were probably brothers, were famous artists in translucent enamels. The latter signed his pieces with the initials "I. P." It is not known exactly who bore the initials "K. I. P." but the pieces so signed have a strong family likeness to the known works of the Pénicauds. Leonard or Nardon Pénicaud has left work almost exclusively of religious character, in plaques for triptychs. Some fine examples are found in the collections of Baron Davillier, Baron Gustave de Rothschild and the Lyons

Museum. Those in the last named are remarkable for their carnations, showing violet shades of peculiar effect, with polychromatic draperies on a white ground. In Jehan Pénicaud's work there is a characteristic russet tint in his flesh painting and the draperies are traced on the metal itself instead of on the white priming. The pieces signed "K. I. P." generally represent combats of knights, and the whole treatment is rather microscopic. The plaque for a coffer illustrated herewith has a counterpart in the Davillier collection.



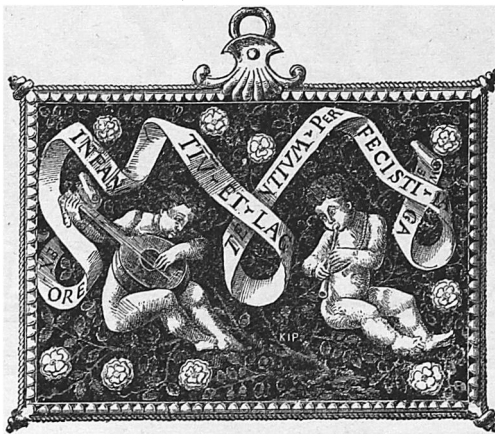
ITALIAN ENAMEL OF ABOUT THE YEAR 1500.

IN THE GATTEAUX COLLECTION.

More famous than any of the Pénicaud family was Leonard Limousin. The surname was conferred upon him by Francis I., to distinguish him from Leonardo da Vinci. The beautiful reredos in the Beurdeley collection, illustrated in our last number, it will be remembered, was by this master. The Italian enamels represented herewith are of earlier date, perhaps of the latter portion of the fifteenth century.

AN EXHIBITION OF FANS.

THERE was an interesting loan exhibition of fans at the rooms of the New York Decorative Art Society last



COFFER PLAQUE OF PAINTED ENAMEL.

IN THE BEURDELEY COLLECTION.

month, held according to the society's custom of providing every spring some form of artistic entertainment and instruction. The collection was the most complete and valuable that has yet been brought together in this country. From the latter part of the seventeenth century to the present time the various styles were more or less abundantly illustrated, and the

changes and transitions of the different periods in some instances plainly shown. Thanks to the industrious research of the ladies, the fans were chronologically arranged, and plainly ticketed, all necessary explanations being given.

The oldest object in the collection was a Venetian dagger fan. The sticks were of ivory, decoratively etched in black. Within the shaft was concealed the terrible steel, whose sturdiness and point forbid the idea that it was any dainty plaything. The fan was constructed so far on the principle of the sword-cane, and

could be used as a weapon of offence or defence as easily as for the purposes of coquetry. An old Spanish fan of a little later date better suited the gentle warfare of which the fan is the principal weapon. This, amid its somewhat gaudy ornamentation, has plates of mica that serve as windows through which the effect of its execution can be observed. The Louis XIV. fans belonging to this period are distinguished by their Watteau designs and by the great elegance of their ivory sticks. These are broad and beautifully carved in medallions and interlacing lines. Several Dutch fans of the period were shown, in which the French influence is felt but clumsily interpreted. A Spanish fan assigned to this age, owned by Miss Furniss, was as notable for its color as for the refinement of its design—a beautiful harmony of yellows and browns, very unlike the more florid ornament of this period. In the case assigned to the Louis XV. era the decadence of ornament is plainly felt. Most of the sticks are slender, wide apart, and are covered with unmeaning designs in color, and lavishly bespangled.

The designs in imitation of Watteau are panelled off and intertwined with wreaths. One of these fans, owned by Mrs. Alsop, and shown in the illustration (page 91), presents a couple engaged in the love making which was the chief amusement of the Louis XV. shepherdesses and their swains; it displays, however, the sentimentality of Boucher rather than the gay sparkle of Watteau figures. The Dutch fans of the time are ornamented with local-scenes, chiefly commercial—an interesting commentary on the growth of Dutch trade—and with scriptural subjects executed with the homely fidelity that characterizes Dutch art.

The sticks of the Louis XVI. fans are elaborately ornamented. In one, belonging to Miss Tuckerman, the sticks are cut in small figures, painted in color. Usually these are in gilt with a figure overlying each stick. In the beautiful Louis XVI. fan lent by Mrs. F. W. Jones (illustrated on page 91), the Boucher influence is still felt in the musical couple. The color, however, is very tender, and the groups of Cupids playing show the Louis XV. panels adapted to a new use. The ornament in all these fans is lighter and gayer, and the color is less gaudy.

The classic influence of the Directory is seen in the subjects of later date, mounted, however, on the narrow Louis XVI. sticks. With these are placed some pretty Dutch fans in carved bone, and small ivory hand-screens finished in gilt. Several "Vernis-Martin" fans, lent by Mrs. Belmont, Mrs. S. L. M. Barlow, and Mrs. R. M. Hunt, are brought together. Martin, it will be remembered, was a carriage painter of the time of



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* Grisaille, or camaieu—painting in gray; resulting in a chiaro scuro or monochrome picture.